

BOOK REVIEWS

TREATISE ON SURGICAL INFECTIONS. By Frank Lamont Meleney, M.D., Associate Professor of Clinical Surgery, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University; Associate Visiting Surgeon, Presbyterian Hospital, New York. Oxford Medical Publications, Oxford University Press, New York, 1948. \$12.00.

This volume represents the observation of a keen student of both bacteriology and surgery over a busy 25 years of active practice. As the author mentions in the preface, the advent of the sulfonamides in 1935 and later World War II postponed the publication of this work and, of course, greatly changed and augmented this study.

The purposes of the book, as stated by the author, are threefold: (1) To maintain high standards of sterile technique; (2) to elucidate the bacteriological problems of surgery; and (3) to describe the natural course of surgical infections with and without surgical procedure and their therapeutic aids.

Of interest is a foreword written in 1940 by Hans Zinsser, who read the first draft of the manuscript.

The first eight chapters are devoted to the study and maintenance of sterile technique. The next four carry out the second purpose of the book, namely the elucidation of bacteriological problems. The remainder of the work is devoted to the third purpose, as outlined above.

Of particular interest are the chapters on the uses of zinc peroxide and bacteriophage in active therapy of infection. The latter is chiefly of academic interest, and at least to date there is but little clinical application that is feasible.

As might be expected because of the rapidly changing picture of antibiotic therapy, the last chapter devoted to this subject is the least up-to-date and probably even misleading. Two cases are cited, one of anaerobic cellulitis of the arm and one of gas gangrene of the abdominal wall, in which the patient died despite penicillin and surgical incision. It should be noted that the total dosages of penicillin amounted to 280,000 units and 175,000 units, respectively. These doses are known now to be far too small, and in no way should these cases be used to illustrate the questionable value of penicillin in anaerobic infection.

The value of such a volume to the individual surgeon is of some question. Its place will probably be as a reference book in a well-equipped medical school library or the libraries of the larger hospitals.

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THE PHYSIOLOGY OF THE EYE. By Hugh Davson, D.Sc. (Lond.), Honorary Research Associate, University College, London. 301 Illustrations. The Blakiston Company, Philadelphia, Pa., 1949.

This book, written by a former Canadian professor of physiology, who has had experience in teaching in ophthalmology, fills a long-felt need.

Following a description of the anatomy of the eye the book is divided into five sections which have the following titles: Intraocular Dynamics and the Transparent Tissues; The Mechanism of Vision; The Muscular Mechanisms; Visual Perception; and Optics.

The sections discuss the important parts of the subject without overwhelming the student with too much theory or too much detail. One of the subjects that has always been troublesome to the student of ophthalmology has been optics. As the author states, "The ophthalmologist is not concerned with formulae and still less with their mathematical derivation; he must understand sufficient of the general principles to enable him to speak intelligibly on the subject to the optician." With this in mind the author

has cut the formulae to a minimum and illustrates the text with clear, easily-understood diagrams.

The book is an excellent one and has already been adopted as the textbook on physiology in one of our well-known postgraduate courses in ophthalmology.

The format is excellent, the print being very readable and the illustrations being clean-cut and well printed. The book was printed in Great Britain and bound in this country.

The book can be recommended as an excellent text on the physiology of the eye for the student of ophthalmology, particularly the resident in ophthalmology.

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PSYCHODYNAMICS AND THE ALLERGIC PATIENT. By Harold A. Abramson, M.D., Associate Physician for Allergy, The Mount Sinai Hospital, New York, N. Y. A Panel Discussion. The Bruce Publishing Company, St. Paul and Minneapolis, 1948, for the American College of Allergists, 423 LaSalle Medical Bldg., Minneapolis 2, Minn.

Dr. Abramson has combined in an 85-page book two of his articles on the psychologic aspects of allergic manifestations, with a panel discussion by a number of internists, allergists and psychiatrists. The author "hopes that this first step in the coordination of organizational allergy and psychodynamics will lead to the ultimate recognition of the importance of emotional factors in the routine therapy of the allergic patient by both the allergist and the general practitioner."

In the first section, Dr. Abramson reveals briefly the early psychologic explanations for asthma and rhinitis by quotations from various authors from Hippocrates to Mackenzie in 1887 and Thorowgood in 1879.

In the second section the author finds himself at a loss to always explain or completely correlate his patients' symptoms by use of the immunologic model. He thus gives brief summaries from his patients' records in which he believes factors of emotion seem to play a major part. It is emphasized by Dr. Frank Fremont-Smith that the author has every right to do this, as he has gained respectability by having done important work on physicochemical mechanisms connected with immunologic processes in allergy.

In the panel discussion Drs. Frank Fremont-Smith, Edward Weiss, Hal Davison, Sandor Rado, O. Spurgeon English, M. Murray Peshkin, John A. P. Millet and John H. Mitchell ably discuss the importance of psychodynamic factors. They are in agreement that these play important roles in the symptoms of asthma, rhinitis and urticaria.

Drs. Leon Unger and George L. Waldbott commented on the dangers of attributing all unknowns to psychic factors while Rudolf L. Baer, principally interested in allergic dermatoses, stated that he had never seen a case of urticaria, atopic dermatitis or eczema in which a psychic factor could have been a major cause. He did admit that psychic factors may contribute through the autonomic nervous system.

It is admirable that several of the speakers had the temerity to admit that actually little is known, for example, about the detail of the mechanisms involved in asthma on the one hand and the neuroses on the other.

Dr. Smith brought out that the very respectable physicists no longer think of single causality and Dr. Abramson concludes that allergy and psychiatry should now be synthesized by the clinician in theory and practice.

In the opinion of the reviewer this book should be read with respect and interest by those dealing with these syndromes, but because of the multiple factors involved in many such problems a great humility should be practiced by both psychiatrists and others in relation to etiology.

Many of us have long ago accepted the value of psychotherapy, and a book such as this seems rather behind the times. However, its essential good is that we now may feel officially released from the restrictions implied by the frame of reference of immunology and should simply believe that if therapy by any procedure is efficiently successful, both for relief and prevention of symptoms, it should be used, even though essential explanations may eventually come through electrochemistry at the other end of the neuron.

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PSYCHIATRY IN GENERAL PRACTICE. By Melvin W. Thorner, M.D., D.Sc., Assistant Professor of Neurology, Graduate School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania. 659 pages. W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia. 1948. \$8.00.

This volume was written primarily for the use of general practitioners and students in order "to acquaint the internist and general practitioner with those aspects of psychiatric theory and practice which are of constant daily concern to him." After a preliminary few pages on the plan of the book, the second section deals with "The People," more or less typical kinds of psychiatric patients. There is a chapter on intelligent people, with above-average intelligence, in whom emotional problems interfere with adequate functioning, and another chapter on "Dull People," about those whose lack of average intelligence creates emotional, social and economic problems. Then follows a section on "People and Sex," with general considerations of basic sexual drives and problems arising from these. Chapter 5 presents the effects of unusual happenings like war, disease, social and economic failure on the equilibrium of people, emphasizing that catastrophe may actually lead to improvement in some and be used as rationalization for illness in others, and that the patient must be considered the product of the effect of environment upon his hereditary tendencies. Depressive reactions are discussed under the heading of "Unhappy People," and here manic-depressive psychosis and neurotic depressions are described. Mental symptoms resulting from organic disease of the brain of patients in whom alteration in brain function can be demonstrated are described in the chapters entitled, "Dementing People," and "Confused People," with case reports of patients suffering from general paresis, encephalitis, carbon monoxide poisoning, brain tumor, epilepsy, Huntington's chorea, delirium, alcohol, etc. Schizophrenic reactions and the paranoid reactions are referred to in sections on "Dreamy People," "Suspicious People," and "Queer and Twisted People," while other sections describe the psychoneuroses as "Anxious People," geriatric problems as "Older People," and pediatric problems as "The Children."

The third section of the book is a formal consideration of the methods of psychiatry, the history and psychiatric examination, the neurological and physical examination, and various laboratory procedures utilized. Simple advice on the psychiatric interview is given, followed by chapters on therapy, considering such varied approaches as chemotherapy, physiotherapy, hydrotherapy, insulin and convulsive therapy, electronarcosis and frontal lobotomy. In the chapter on psychotherapy, emphasis is given to the so-called short forms of psychotherapy applicable to psychiatric problems one meets in general practice. Throughout the whole book, detailed case reports are given, pointing up the personality of the patients treated and the therapeutic approach. An appendix lists the classification of mental disorders adopted from that approved by the Council of the American Psychiatric Association, and also quotes a report on commitment procedures prepared by the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry.

The author has obviously and studiously avoided as much of the technical jargon of psychiatry as he could, sometimes

sacrificing clarity as a result, but on the whole the volume is an honest exposition of the general kind of psychiatric problems that one meets in practice. Because of its simplicity, the physician who has had little psychiatric background and training can read it with profit.

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THE DOCTOR WEARS THREE FACES. By Mary Bard. J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, April 15, 1949. \$3.00.

The sister of the author of "The Egg and I" reveals a style suggesting that heredity may have some place in wit and humor. She is the wife of a physician practicing apparently in the Pacific Northwest and she writes ably on fourteen points in the thorny path of equanimity. Most physicians' wives will enjoy this book, especially those who attended the quinquennial three-ring circus known as an A.M.A. Convention in San Francisco. The chapter on the author's pursuit and capture of her husband is perhaps the most entertaining in the book. Recommended for light summer fare and not social significance.

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ESSENTIALS OF GYNECOLOGIC ENDOCRINOLOGY. By Gardner M. Riley, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Michigan Medical School. Caduceus Press, Box 17, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1948. \$3.00.

This is an excellent little book which should appeal to students, hospital house officers, and to practitioners who deal with women, because it is quite comprehensive yet is brief, clear and to the point. It is also well documented. The first section, containing 13 chapters on 62 pages, reviews endocrine physiology. This includes discussion of the pituitary hormones, the endocrine function of the ovaries, the effects of the ovarian hormones, the hormonology of menstruation, and the other cyclic changes in the genital tract. Also discussed in this section are the hormone changes associated with pregnancy and with the physiology of the breasts. Short sections take up the hormonal physiology of the adrenal glands, the thyroid and parathyroid glands, the pancreas, the thymus and the pineal body, particularly as their functions are related to genital function.

A second section discusses clinical aspects. This includes consideration of puberty and the menopause, menstrual dysfunctions and the endocrine disorders of pregnancy. Abnormal sexual development such as infantilism and pseudohermaphroditism are discussed. Even the endocrinology of the male is considered. The carcinogenic possibilities of the steroid hormones are discussed.

The third section takes up diagnostic procedures such as the vaginal smear, endometrial biopsy and hormone assays, as well as giving a brief exposition of hormone chemistry, and a tabulation of potent endocrine preparations which are available commercially.

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1948 YEAR BOOK OF GENERAL MEDICINE. Edited by Paul B. Beeson, M.D., J. Burns Amberson, M.D., George R. Minot, M.D., William B. Castle, M.D., Tinsley R. Harrison, M.D., and George B. Eusterman, M.D. The Year Book Publishers Inc., 304 S. Dearborn St., Chicago, 1948. \$4.50.

The 1948 Year Book contains abstracts of the pertinent literature in general medicine for the last half of 1947 and the first half of 1948. Paul B. Beeson has replaced George F. Dick as the editor for Infectious Diseases and Tinsley R. Harrison has replaced William D. Stroud as editor for Diseases of the Heart and Blood Vessels. The articles are well abstracted and well arranged. The Year Books are of use essentially to the busy practitioner who can not, or will not keep up with medical literature himself and who prefers his medical information predigested. They are preferable to the summaries of the drug houses which, while often excellent, tend to be biased in favor of their own products.